Island-sensitive Sluicing in Turkish

Although sluicing has been analyzed as being island-insensitive (Ross (1969), Merchant (2001), among others), I demonstrate that sluicing in Turkish is island-sensitive. In Turkish, the wh-phrase in an adjunct clause does not raise to matrix Spec-CP. Turkish has an optional Q-like particle –ki which attaches to both yes-no and wh-interrogatives. (1-2). Because the clitic ki is optional, it cannot be a Q-particle. However, its position after the Q-particle (1b) shows that it is in the CP-domain. Furthermore, it occurs only in matrix clauses (3). The interaction between the wh-phrase in sluicing structures and the particle ki provides evidence that this particle is in the CP because only wh-phrase(s) and other elements in the C0 domain can be spelled-out in sluicing structures.

First, it is not elided in matrix sluicing constructions (4). The elided element in B’s utterance is shown in (5). In (5) the wh-phrase raises to the CP domain. IP is elided, and the wh-phrase and the particle ki are sent to PF. That ki is pronounced with the wh-phrase is support that it is in the CP domain.

Second, when a wh-phrase is in an embedded complement clause, it and the particle ki are both pronounced in sluicing constructions (6).

However, a wh-phrase in an adjunct clause cannot co-occur with ki in sluicing structures. In non-sluicing cases ki can occur (merge) in matrix clauses (7a-b’), but in sluicing, a wh-phrase and ki cannot co-occur (7a-b), in contrast to sluicing in complement clauses. This indicates that a wh-element in an adjunct clause does not raise to matrix Spec-CP in Turkish.

The Complex NP Constraint is also observed in sluicing structures with ki (8). In non-sluicing cases, ki occurs in the matrix clause and the clause is grammatical with interrogative force (8b) whereas in sluicing structures, the wh-phrase and ki cannot co-occur (8c).

Complement clauses are not islands. A wh-phrase can move out of the complement clause. In Turkish, a phrase in a complement clause can scramble to the right- or left-periphery of the matrix clause (9).

This contrasts with adjunct clauses which are islands and which do not allow a phrase to scramble to the matrix clause (10).

The ungrammaticality of (7) and (8) demonstrates that adjunct and complex NP islands retain their island-properties even in sluicing cases. Thus, sluicing in Turkish is island-sensitive. This finding in Turkish has theoretical implications: that adjunct islands are not simply PF islands, counter to Merchant’s (2001) assumption. If they were only PF islands, (7 a-b) would be possible (see also 7a”-b”); i.e., when they are elided, the ‘*’ (island) feature would be deleted. The facts indicate that the ‘*’ feature remains in the structure and therefore adjunct islands in Turkish are more than PF-islands.

Examples:
(1) a. Ahmet geldi mi ?  
A.-Nom come-Past-3.s. Q-particle  
‘Did Ahmet come?’

b. Ahmet geldi mi ki?  
A.-Nom come-Past-3.s. Q-particle ki  
‘Did Ahmet come, then?’

(2) a. Ahmet ne yedi?  
A.-Nom what eat-Past-3.s.  
‘What did Ahmet eat?’

b. Ahmet ne yedi ki?  
A.-Nom what eat-Past-3.s. ki  
‘What did Ahmet eat, then?’

(3) Hasan’ın ne yediğini (*ki) duydun?  
‘What did you hear that Hasan ate (then)?’
A: Dün seni biri aradı.

B: Kim ki?

(5) Kim dün seni aradı ki?

(6) a. Hasan seni birinin aradığını söyledi. Kim ki?

H.-Nom. 2.s.pron.-Acc. one-Gen. call-DIK-3.s.poss.-Acc. say-Past-3.s. who-Nom. ki

b. Hasan Ahmet’ın birisinin para verdiği söyledi. Kime ki?


(7) a. Biri seni arayınca Hasan çok sinirlendi. Kim (*ki)?


References
